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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-fifth session

REPORT OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME HELD AT GENEVA ON 20 JUNE 1995

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. An extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme was held on 20 June 1995 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Kamal (Pakistan), Chairman of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme. The meeting was convened in order to adopt decisions concerning summary records and a number of other aspects of Executive Committee documentation.

B. Representation on the Committee

2. The following members of the Committtee were represented at the session:

Algeria, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Morrocco, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America.

3. The Governments of the following States were present as observers:

Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Senegal, Slovakia, Uruguay.

4. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented by observers:

European Commission, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Organization for Migration, Organization of the Islamic Conference, United Nations International Children's Fund, World Food Programme.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda (A/AC.96/842):

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Summary records
3. Executive Committee Working Methods
4. Any other business

II. WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

6. A full account of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in the summary records of the meeting.

III. DECISIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Decision on Executive Committee documentation

7. The Executive Committee,

Recalling decisions taken at the 16 January and 4 April meetings of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters, and noting the recommendations of the Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods, the Executive Committee decides that:

(a) in order to facilitate effective decision-making, all documentation prepared for Sub-Committee or Standing Committee[1] meetings must be available to delegations at least three weeks prior to any meeting;

(b) consideration of any agenda item on which a Sub-Committee or Standing Committee decision or conclusion is required will be postponed to a later meeting in cases where documentation is not made available at least three weeks before the Sub-Committee or Standing Committee meeting at which it is scheduled for consideration;

(c) where exceptional circumstances justify the late issue of any document, the above requirements may be waived by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee or Standing Committee;

(d) a clear distinction will be introduced between information papers and those requiring substantive discussion and endorsement by the Executive Committee or the Sub-Committee or Standing Committee;

(e) where a decision or conclusion of the Executive Committee or Sub-Committee or Standing Committee is sought, each document will conclude with a proposed text for adoption by the Committee;

(f) Executive Committee and Sub-Committee or Standing Committee documents will be limited in principle to six single-spaced pages, including the text of any accompanying decision or conclusion;

(g) any policy documents which exceed the six-page limit will be accompanied by a one-page executive summary to facilitate the work of delegations;

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[1] The Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods has recommended that the Sub-Committee of the Whole on International Protection and the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters be replaced by a single Standing Committee. This recommendation will be put to the forty-sixth session of the Executive Committee in October 1995 for adoption.

(h) the six-page limit for Executive Committee and Sub-Committee or Standing Committee documents will also be applied to country chapters;

(i) all policy documents and other documentation of general interest submitted to the annual plenary session of the Executive Committee will continue to be issued in the official languages;

(j) in order to ensure that delegations receive in a timely fashion the translated versions of those documents to which they themselves accord priority, as well as to reduce costs, country chapters relating to UNHCR's programme budgets will be issued automatically only in the Working Languages of the Executive Committee, while individual chapters will be made available in other official languages upon selective request by any member delegation.

B. Decision on the reconsideration by the Executive Committee of its need for summary records

8. The Executive Committee,

Noting General Assembly Resolution 49/221 B of 23 December 1994 which requests that the Executive Committee submit to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences, justifications for the continuation of the current entitlement to summary records,

Recalling that, in view of its entitlement to summary records, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/14 C of 16 November 1982, the Executive Committee has eliminated all summaries of discussion from its report,

Noting with concern that elimination of summary records would run counter to measures taken to reduce the length of the Executive Committee report,

Recalling current initiatives of the Executive Committee to reduce further the volume of documentation provided to it,

Noting that Executive Committee requirements for summary records have been reduced to 24 hours of meeting time and account for a modest percentage of overall meeting costs,

Reaffirming the importance of summary records in reflecting statements, explanations and reservations of delegations and thus in facilitating the preservation of the tradition of consensus in decision-making,

(a) Concludes that there is a strong justification and a valid need to maintain summary records of its proceedings;

(b) Requests the Chairman of the Executive Committee to convey its views to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences.